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RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 0361
RUEHBU/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES 7570
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 4617
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA 4952
RUEHMD/AMEMBASSY MADRID 4388
RUEHMN/AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO 6279
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SUBJECT: POSITIVE TARIJA EVENTS: BOOKS, OREGANO, BASEBALL

¶1. Building on the positive relationship enjoyed between the Embassy and the southern, gas-producing Department (state) of Tarija, the A/DCM traveled to the region May 7-8 to host a variety of events. A PAS book donation was attended by the mayor of Tarija, Oscar Montes and well over 100 red, white, and blue wielding students. It was the second such donation in Tarija and a third local library is set to receive books later this year. The books have been a tremendous success and the librarians present testified to the high demand among the local children and youth for more materials.

¶2. At a lunch with ten prominent local businessmen, the A/DCM listened to the litany of difficulties they faced in an opposition state during the tenure of the Morales Administration. While optimism was scarce, there was a strong sense of commitment to Bolivia and a willingness to work through these difficult times.

¶3. Following the lunch, USAID hosted a product fair at the site of an oregano processing plant. Oregano production has enjoyed great success in the region, with growing exports to Uruguay, Brazil, and Argentina and reportedly insatiable demand. The crop is ideal for small producers and USAID technical assistance helped develop effective methods of growing, drying, separating, and exporting the oregano. In addition, Embassy officials enjoyed a sampling of other Tarija production: berries, wine, cheese, and even Spanish style ham. Many of these now iconic Tarija products had previously received support from USAID. To finish the day, former area Fulbright scholars held a reception attended by the Prefect (governor) Mario Cossio (Septel) and university officials.

¶4. The following day, the Embassy played a baseball game against the Municipal Baseball Association all-stars. In August 2008, the Milgroup donated equipment to the league and an Embassy team was organized to open the 2009 season against the all-star team of 15 to 18 year olds. After three innings of softball and three innings of baseball, the Tarija all-stars walked away with a hard fought 9-8 victory. The event was part of the Embassy's Three Sports, Two Nations, One Healthy Life campaign (Septel). Hamburgers and event t-shirts were shared with the approximately 150 attending parents and children. The event was covered by local press and, at least in its capital city, the USG remains popular in Tarija.

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